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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
INFORMATION REPORT

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 Information

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1. Since February 1954, the conditions of Soviet citizens residing in the Azerbaijan SSR along the Iranian border have generally improved. The Soviet border guards and soldiers have granted more freedom of action to the peasants, and the latter are not subjected to the same violence and pressure as before. The Soviets have allowed the inhabitants of Soviet Astara (N 38-28, E 48-52) and other places on the border strip to fish in the Astara River, although the fishermen are watched by Soviet officers. The Soviets often buy fish, take bribes of money or one or two fish, and then let people fish in the prohibited area. Some of the soldiers have even made friends with the fishermen and peasants, and a secret cooperation exists between the soldiers and peasants regarding fishing. Soviet men and women working on collective farms in the border area were formerly required to work the entire day; recently, however, it has been observed that many Soviet workers are free to rest in the afternoons.

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